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ABSTRACT

In July, 1982, letters were sent to the social studies coordinators in all 50 states requesting a list of high school geography texts approved for use in those states and information on the selection process used. The response rate was 100%. Information acquired from the 20 states that have statewide adoption policies constitute the basis of this paper. The most striking study result was the spatial pattern of states that have state adoption policies. They are almost all in the South or Mountain West. With the exception of Indiana, no state in the Midwest, plains, or Northeast has a statewide adoption policy. Reasons for having statewide adoption might include lack of confidence in local leadership or social and political conservatism. It was also found that large textbook adopting states, especially Texas, have little influence on the current adoption policies of geography texts in other states. The textbooks chosen by the adoption states consistently followed what can be considered the traditional world regional geography format. These texts are listed, along with the name of the publishing company, their publication date, and the number and the names of the states which have adopted them. (RM)

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GEOGRAPHY TEXTBOOKS: WHAT GETS CHOSEN WHERE

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One aspect of geographic education at the secondary level that has received relatively little attention relates to the geography textbook, that is, what textbooks are used and what spatial pattern of textbook adoption exists. Information on textbook use is sketchy on a nationwide basis; it is readily available, however, on books selected for use in states that adopt textbooks on a state-wide basis. Data acquired from the 20 "state adoption" jurisdictions constitute the basis of this paper.

In order to collect data that was as accurate as possible, we sent letters in July, 1982 to the social studies coordinators (or persons with that responsibility) for all fifty states requesting a list of all high school geography texts approved for use in those states as well as information on the selection process used. Ultimately, all fifty states responded in some fashion. Contact with various professional educational organizations provided little relevant information, and communications with textbook publishers were particularly unproductive. Except as noted below, data base and literature searches produced relatively little and, as a consequence, direct information from the states constitutes the chief basis of this report. See Figures 1 and 2.

In order to understand the issues of state-wide adoption as they relate to geography texts, a brief overview of the history of textbook

adoption in the United States might be appropriate. The history of the American textbook is an interesting and elusive one. Textbooks were originally used for reference or review; now they are often the sole source of information for a subject area. Having their beginnings in the early Webster spellers and McGuffey readers, textbooks began to come into their own with the spread of compulsory mass public education at the end of the last century and the start of this one. By the early part of the 20th century, there were more children in school (and hence a market) and the tradional American one room school was being replaced by larger buildings consisting of isolated classrooms. To meet the new need for subject content related to a specific grade , individual textbooks began to be produced.

During this evolution, the textbook also ceased to be authored in the traditional sense; that is, to be associated with a single authority in the field. More typically, they were team authored, edited, or "developed"- the textbook publisher controlling the market instead of an author searching for a publisher for his book. Publishers began to consult state curriculum mandates to see what should be published.

Many well-known textbook publishers of the past have been acquired by large conglomerates such as IBM, Xerox and RCA, whose textbook sales figures are almost impossible to obtain. Thus, the American textbook market appears increasingly to be a lucrative, secretive one, often more related to marketing issues than to educational ones, and highly structured and controlled. One mechanism related to that control is the state adoption of these textbooks, a practice currently followed by 20 states.

Within these states, adoption procedures regarding geography texts

vary widely. Out of the 20 adoption states, information from two states was unavailable, so that the following is based on the remaining 18. In regard to frequency of selection of geography texts, 4 select every 6 years; 6 every 5 years; 3 every 4 years; 1 every 2 years (Texas); and 4 do not indicate frequency. In most jurisdictions the textbook selection committees have a combination of people from various levels of the education field as well as lay people. Utah and Mississippi have supervisory committeees for each curriculum area. By contrast, Kentucky and New Mexico do not provide the social studies specialists voting power in geography textbook adoption. Most states indicate that texts are sent to the selection committee and six states indicate that public hearings on these texts are part of the selection process. No state listed specific guidelines for geography text selection. Out of the 18 states, the connection between politics and this educational process appears obvious because the governor or governor-appointed official selects the committee.

This, then, is the general background of textbok adoption in the United States today. Among the questions relating to geography that we should like to raise are: What pattern exists for jurisdictions that have state-wide adoption policies? What influence, if any, do larger states, such as Texas, have on the adoption policies of other states? What books are in fact selected, and where are they selected?

The first, and perhaps most striking result to come from this study was the spatial pattern of states that have state-wide adoption policies. As can be seen from Figure 3, almost all such states are in the South or Mountain West; with the exception of Indiana, no state in the Midwest, Plains, or Northeast has a state-wide adoption policy. The reasons for this pattern are not immediately

clear. Clyde Tidwell, writing in the 1920's, speculates that southern states might not have had confidence in local leadership. There is also evidence to suggest that parents lobbied for state-wide adoption policies to avoid the expense of new textbooks after each family move, although this motivation would not seem to have been unique to the South or Mountain West. One could also speculate that these two regions tended to be socially and politically more conservative than the rest of the country and felt a greater need to regulate the textbooks that were being used in the schools in their jurisdictions. Indiana, generally considered among the most conservative of Midwestern states would fit into this pattern; only Oregon and Hawaii appear to depart from the general correlation between state-wide adoption policies and areas that are considered to be politically and socially conservative.

A common assertion regarding textbooks is that the large textbook adopting states -- especially Texas -- exercise a disproportionate effect on the textbook selection in other jurisdictions, or at the very least, cause publishers to slant their offerings so as to capture the lucrative Texas market. In order to test the assertion that Texas does in fact have coinsiderable influence outside its borders, Texas's list of geography textbooks was compared with lists in the other adopting states.Two of the five books on Texas' list did not appear on the lists of any of the other states. Moreover, the textbooks chosen in Texas were clearly the oldest of any jurisdiction examined: all were published between 1969 and 1972. Texas thus appears reluctant to adopt newer books that might be attacked on political or social grounds, a reluctance in large part attributable to the activity of Mel and Norma Gabler and their organization, Educational Research Analysts. The conclusion is, therefore, that Texas has relatively little influence on

the current adoption policies of geography texts in other states.

A more rigorous approach to the question of Texas' influence was attempted through the use of a cluster analysis program which produced a series of 20 groupings or clusters. See Figure 4. This clustering routine should identify which states had similar adoption lists for geography texts. Thus, the first cluster would identify those two states whose textbook lists most resembled each other's. Each additional clustering would group each state with other states with which it had the greatest similarity. By the fifteenth cluster all but four states- Texas, Oregon, Louisiana, and Hawaii- had been grouped with other states. In other words, these four states had textbook adoption patterns that differed most markedly from the other state-wide adoption jurisdictions.

The cluster routine also revealed several other interesting relationships. For example, by the tenth cluster three major state groupings had emerged: a "Deep South" cluster of Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi, and Arkansas; a Border South/Mountain West cluster of Florida, Oklahoma, New Mexico, and Nevada; and a Middle South area that also included two non-southern states (North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, Indiana, and Idaho). Although there is some suggestion of a neighborhood effect at work here, the states not clustered are probably most significant. Thus, at this stage of the program, Kentucky, Utah, Louisiana, Hawaii, Oregon, and Texas remained apart from any other group. Although we were unaware of the reasoning behind the textbook selection process in these states, they all, with the possible exception of Kentucky, have distinctive social or political characteristics that set them apart from the other textbook adoption states. Of course, it is impossible to establish a direct

causal connection between the apparent social and political characteristics of states and their textbook selection policies; nevertheless, one might speculate that the states less likely to follow an educational trend in any field would be those states that were distinctive in their basic societal qualities.

Although no attempt was made to analyze in depth each of the thirty-five books individually, certain generalizations can nevertheless be made regarding the content of texts chosen by the state-adoption jurisdictions. The textbooks consistently followed what can be considered the traditional world regional geography format:a few introductory chapters oriented chiefly toward physical geography and maps followed by a region by region description of the world. Moreover, the leading texts all had the same general appearance: all were roughly the same size, and all were profusely illustrated with maps, diagrams and photographs. Encouragingly, many attempted to move beyond simple description towards some explanation of current cultural, economic, and political patterns. It is noteworthy, however, that the High School Geography Project's Geography in an Urban Age was selected by only Utah.

Conclusion The policy of statewide adoption of textbooks produces a clear regional pattern that at this point is only partially understood. As noted above, one might speculate that certain jurisdictions wished to maintain control at the state level of books that would be used at the local level--especially in an era of rigid school segregation when most of the state adoption laws were passed. One is also struck by the frequency of selection of relatively few books out of a large number of possible texts--clearly, states tend to select relatively safe, traditional books with tradional approaches.The

shortage of educators trained in geography may well be a factor here. Finally, the large states, especially Texas, do not appear to have the impact on textbook selection that has been claimed- at least insofar as geography textbooks are concerned.

LITERATURE CITED

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Tidwell, Clyde Jesse. State Control of Textboks, with Special Reference to Florida. New York: AMS Press, 1972.

FIGURE 1
GEOGRAPHY TEXTBOOKS SELECTED FOR USE IN STATES WITH STATE ADOPTION POLICIES - 1982

TITLE	PUBLISHER	DATE*	NUMBER of STATE ADOPTIONS
World Geography Today	HRW	76,80	16
Land and People: A World Geography	S Foresman	79	15
Our World and Its People	Allyn	77,81	11
World Geography	American	79	11
World Geography	Follet	80	10
Geography and World Affairs	HM	71,76	8
The New Exploring a Changing World	Globe	75,80	8
World Geography	SRA	80	7
World Geography	S Burdett	80	6
Global Geography	Macmillan	81	5
Global Insights	Merrill	80	4
People in a Changing World	Laidlaw	74	4
Geography	HM	82	3
People and Cultures	HM	75	3
The Wide World	Macmillan	72	3
World Geography	SW	76	3
Afro-Asian World	Allyn	78	2
Learning About People and Cultures	McDougal	74	2
Our Changing World	Laidlaw	69	2
This is Our World	S Burdett	80,81	2
World Cultures	Scott	77	2
World Neighbors	Macmillan	80	2
"Area Studies"	AW	79	1
Deciding How to Live On Spaceship Earth	McDougal	73	1
High School Geography Project	Macmillan	79	1
Human Expression	Lippincott	77	1
Idea and Action in World Cultures	PH	77	1
Man and His World	S Burdett	72	1
People on Earth	S Foresman	83	1
People, Places and Changes	HRW	81	1
Principles of Geography	Barron	75	1
Rise of the City	AW	71	1
The Western Hemisphere	Allyn	78	1
World Geography	Litton	79	1

*Dominant year is _____

FIGURE 2

GEOGRAPHY TEXTBOOKS SELECTED FOR USE IN STATES WITH STATE ADOPTION POLICIES - 1982

TITLE	AL	AR	FL	GA	HI	ID	IN	KY	MS	NE	NM	NC	OK	OR	SC	TN	TX	UT	VA
World Geography Today	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X		X	X		X	X
Land and People: A World Geography	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X			X		X	X
Our World and Its People	X	X	X			X	X	X	X					X		X	X			X
World Geography	X		X	X				X	X	X	X			X			X		X	X
World Geography	X	X	X	X	X				X	X	X	X		X						
Geography and World Affairs						X	X		X				X			X	X	X		X
The New Exploring a Changing World			X					X	X			X	X	X			X			X
World Geography		X	X	X	X				X			X							X	
World Geography	X	X	X	X					X					X						
Global Geography	X	X		X	X					X										
Global Insights	X	X						X						X						
People in a Changing World						X	X		X						X					
Geography					X									X					X	
People and Cultures								X			X			X						
The Wide World								X						X				X		
World Geography										X		X			X					
Afro-Asian World		X						X												
Learning About People and Cultures								X						X						
Our Changing World								X									X			
This is Our World			X																X	
World Cultures	X													X						
World Neighbors	X		X																	
"Area Studies"								X												
Deciding How to Live On Spaceship Earth								X												
High School Geography Project																		X		
Human Expression														X						
Idea and Action in World Cultures														X						
Man and His World																	X			
People on Earth				X																
People, Places and Changes		X																		
Principles of Geography											X									
Rise of the City																	X			
The Western Hemisphere															X					
World Geography				X																

FIGURE 3

STATE-WIDE ADOPTION OF HIGH SCHOOL TEXTBOOKS

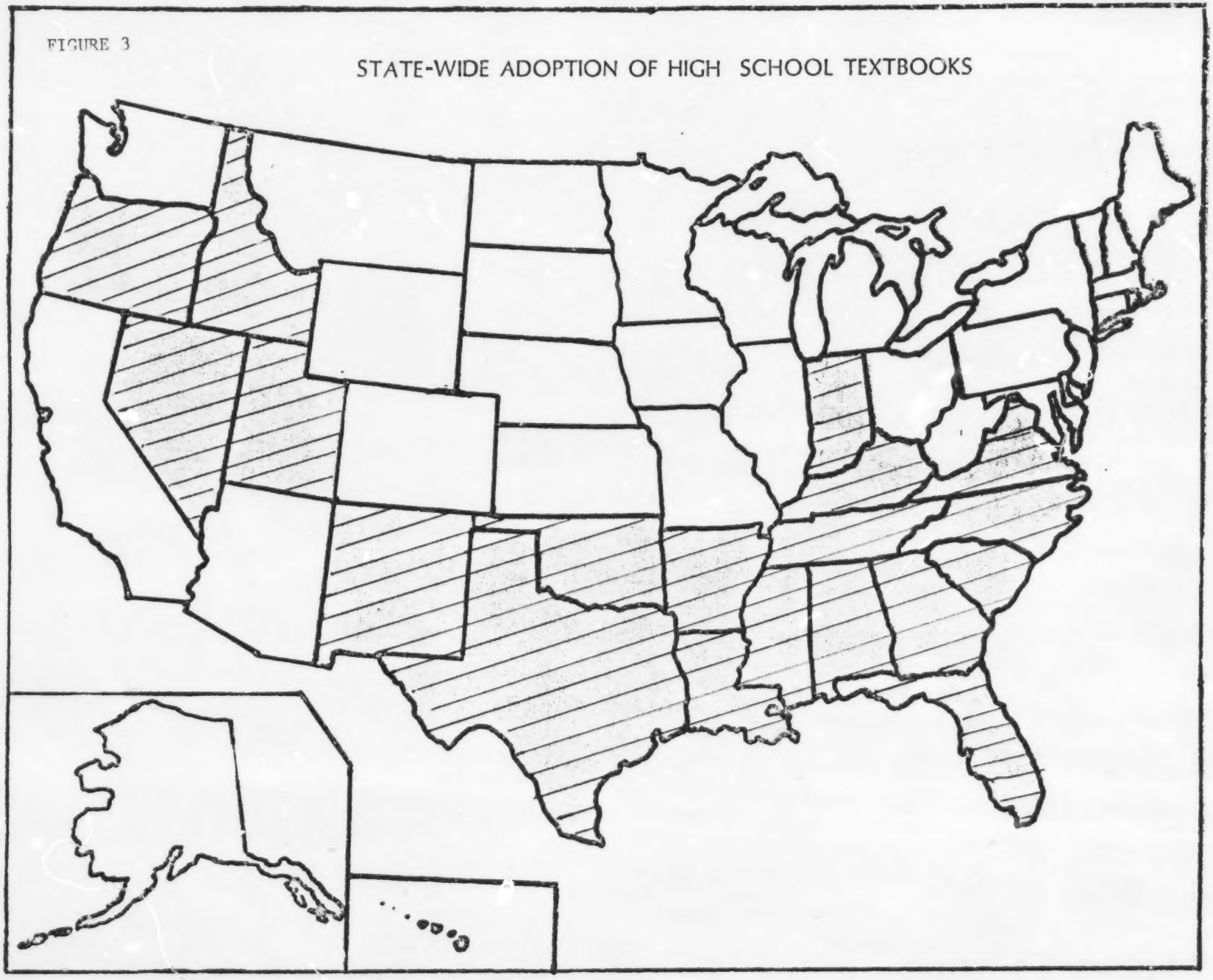
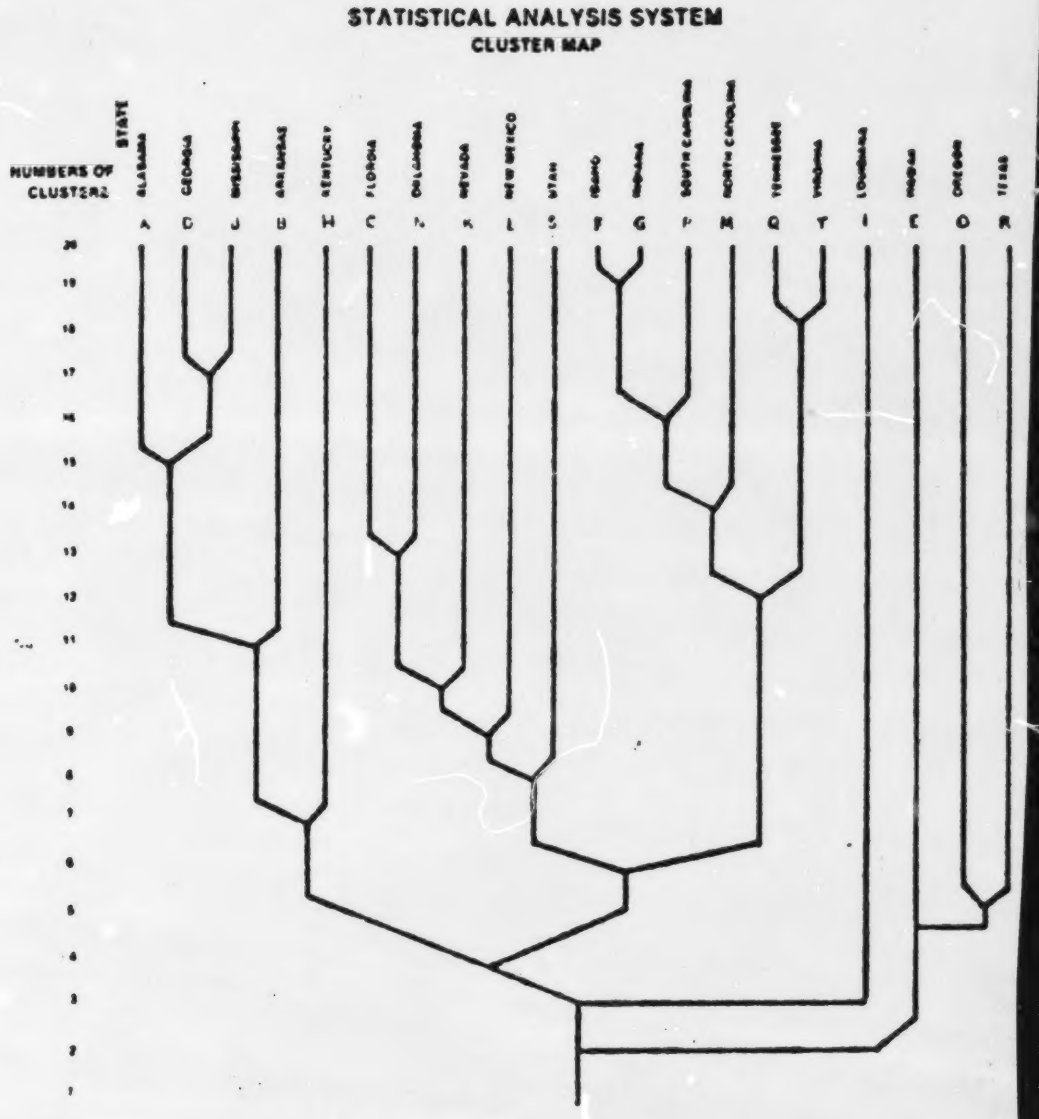


FIGURE 4



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